

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are pending. Claims 1, 7, 11, 16, 19, 21, and 26 are amended. Claims 3, 4, 17, 18 and 20 have been canceled. No new matter has been added. In view of the following comments, allowance of all the claims pending in the application is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(e) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,988,138 to Alcorn et al. (hereinafter “Alcorn”) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0103882 to Johnston et al. (hereinafter “Johnston”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection on the following basis.

One aspect of the invention relates a plurality of distributed second computer systems (380a, 380b, 380n) onto which a course is installed on each. The second computer system for a course may comprise one or more virtual machines (132) for each exercise of the course. The one or more virtual machines allow remote users to carry out exercises in IT related courses (among other types of courses) that are usually technically not well suited for distance learning environments. (See Applicants’ Specification at least at pg. 2 lines 1-10).

Claim 1 has been amended to recite, among other things, “determining which of a plurality of second computer systems are available, wherein each second computer system is associated with a course, and comprises a remote display server; selecting a second computer system that is available and onto which the selected course is installed; sending a message to the selected second computer system wherein the message includes the exercise identifier that identifies the user-selected exercise; loading the remote display server of the selected second computer system” Claims 7, 11, 16, and 21 have been amended in a similar manner. At least these features are not taught or suggested by Alcorn and Johnston.

Alcorn discloses a method for providing a core subsystem 150 for allowing the creation of courses to be taken by students online. Courses materials are loaded onto the core subsystem 150 which a user accesses can access in order to complete course assignments. See Alcorn, Abstract and Fig. 1. Alcorn fails to disclose a plurality of *second computer systems*, wherein each second computer system is associated with a course. Rather, Alcorn discloses all courses, including course content, being installed at a single system (e.g., core subsystem 130). As such, Alcorn does not disclose, among other things, the features of “a plurality of second computer systems...wherein each second computer system is associated with a course.”

The Examiner admits that Alcorn does not teach the one or more virtual machines. The Examiner attempts to combine Alcorn with Johnston to make up for these deficiencies. However, the combination of Alcorn with Johnston (assuming arguendo that the combination is proper) still does not suggest at least the claim feature of “a plurality of second computer systems...wherein each second computer system is associated with a course,” as recited above. The cited portions of Johnston relate to a distance learning method wherein a user can connect to a web server to perform *an exercise* but does not disclose a second computer system associated with a course, as claimed. Johnston fails to even disclose exercises associated with courses. Rather, Johnston allows access to random exercises without any type of course information. Thus, even the combination of Alcorn with Johnston does not teach and/or suggest all of the features of at least claims 1, 7, 11, 16, and 21. As such, claims 1, 7, 11, 16, and 21 are patentable over Alcorn with Johnston.

Additionally, claims 2-6, 8-10, 12-15, 17-20, and 22-26 depend from and add features to one of the independent claims. As such, these claims are allowable over the combination of Alcorn and Johnston at least due to their dependency.

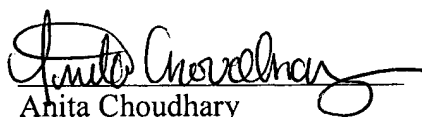
Having addressed each of the foregoing rejections, it is respectfully submitted that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the application is in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

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Respectfully submitted,

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